

# Clarithromycin

*kla-RITH-roe-mye-sin*

**Brand Name:** Biaxin

**Drug Class:** Opportunistic Infection and Other Drugs

Clarithromycin, also known as Biaxin, belongs to the class of medicines known as antibacterials. Antibacterials keep bacteria from multiplying. Clarithromycin controls the infection and allows the body's immune system to kill the bacteria. Clarithromycin is used to fight many common bacteria that cause sore throat, ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, and skin infections. Clarithromycin can also be used to treat some stomach ulcers.

## HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

Clarithromycin is used to prevent and treat *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) disease. MAC is an opportunistic infection caused by types of mycobacteria. Opportunistic infections are more common in people with weakened immune systems, including those with HIV or AIDS.

Clarithromycin was approved by the FDA for treatment of MAC on December 23, 1993, and for the prevention of MAC on October 12, 1995. Different doses of the drug may be needed for treatment and prevention. When used for treatment of MAC, clarithromycin should be given together with other antibacterial drugs.

## Dosage Form/Administration

Clarithromycin comes in immediate release and extended release tablet forms and in liquid form, all taken by mouth. Both the immediate release tablet and liquid forms may be taken with or without food, but the extended release tablet should be taken with food.

## Contraindications

Individuals with kidney disease should tell a doctor before taking this medicine.

Clarithromycin should not be used during pregnancy unless no other drugs will work against the infection.

## Possible Side Effects

Along with its desired effects, clarithromycin can cause some serious unwanted effects. Patients should notify a doctor right away if they have severe abdominal pain, fever, severe nausea and vomiting, unusual bleeding or bruising, watery or bloody diarrhea, yellow skin or eyes, or skin rash and itching.

Other side effects may not be serious and may lessen or disappear with continued use of clarithromycin. Less serious side effects include diarrhea, headache, nausea and vomiting, and change in taste.

## Drug and Food Interactions

A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), and herbal medications.

## Clinical Trials

For information on clinical trials that involve Clarithromycin, visit the ClinicalTrials.gov web site at <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. In the Search box, enter: Clarithromycin AND HIV Infections.

## Manufacturer Information

Clarithromycin  
Abbott Laboratories  
One Hundred Abbott Park Rd  
Abbott Park, IL 60064-3500  
(800) 633-9110

Biaxin  
Abbott Laboratories  
One Hundred Abbott Park Rd  
Abbott Park, IL 60064-3500  
(800) 633-9110

## For More Information

Contact your doctor or an AIDSinfo Health Information Specialist:

- Via Phone: 1-800-448-0440 Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 5:00 p.m. ET

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## **For More Information (cont.)**

- Via Live Help: [http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live\\_help](http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live_help)  
Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET